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Atari Online News, Etc.  
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->From the Editor's Keyboard

"Saying it like it is!"

I've been writing for and/or publishing an Atari-based online magazine for over 10 years. In all those years it has been my unwritten policy to not politicize or include topics that did not concern themselves with Atari and other computer/gaming news. I've always felt that personal tidbits - comments about my home and work life - were acceptable. Even in years past I've written about heated subjects pertaining to Atari and other technology topics. But today I will make an exception.

The cowardly attacks on the United States this week has the world in total shock. I cannot ignore it - the news is everywhere. I honestly do not know what to say. I am shocked and angry. I am amazed that something like this could happen. I am upset, feeling that it should have been prevented somehow. I want to see all those responsible, and those who condone and support such terrorist acts, caught and dealt with appropriately. World terrorism must be dealt with the utmost severity.

I am usually a peaceful person. I marched for peace many times during the Vietnam protests. But I do understand the need to respond to various world events, with military responses - especially when the freedoms that we believe in and support here in the United States, and the world, are threatened. Whether it be here, Israel, Europe, or other democratic states, we have to take a stand. Yes, that stand can be unfavorable. But, I believe that it is our belief in freedom that dictates this reaction. And now those beliefs have been tested within our own borders.

You all saw the devastation that took place in New York, Washington, and in Pennsylvania. It has been difficult not to continue to listen to or watch the continued coverage. It's unbelievable. The United States, and likely the world, will never be the same again.

But I must also say that this atrocious act has brought people together throughout the world. I do want to say that I have received numerous e-mails from people outside of the United States - people that I have never met, and some whom I have never corresponded - conveying their thoughts, condolences, and support. Not only for me, as an American, but for all of America and what this country has endured this past week. Words cannot express how grateful I feel to receive these letters. Amazingly, this is the second time this year that I have received an outpouring of support. The last time was seven months ago when my mother passed away. Now, it's a much greater tragedy that has affected millions of people. The only words that I can think of are Thank You.

While we wait in great anticipation to find survivors in New York, to learn of lost friends and relatives, and to find and punish those responsible - we really need to reflect on what has occurred, and why. I believe that some personal freedoms will be compromised, at least temporarily.

But some of these freedoms were amazing this past week. The internet provided me with news of this atrocity as it unfolded. We have no television nearby, and radio reception is poor, at best, in my department. Many of us periodically checked various news sites to get updates. My first site of what had occurred was late in the afternoon. The web was fantastic until I could find another source.

And there's the seedy side taking advantage of this event, as you'll read about this week. Online scams that will try to take advantage of people's feelings, and wallets. Viruses under the guise of prayer. It's happened, unfortunately.

Yet I believe that this tragedy will make us stronger. It has certainly been a costly lesson of freedom. It will, however, unite people and nations to fight back for that freedom.

Again, please accept my utmost thanks to all of you who have written to me this week. I cannot put into words what your thoughts have meant to me. Prayers, shock, support, disbelief, concern - all expressed in these personal letters.

Please do what you can to support those in need. Donate blood. Hug your loved ones. Pray for the families and loved ones affected by this act of terrorism. Learn from this event. Be safe.

Until next time...

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EmuTOS - First Release (Very Alpha)

For those of you, who are interested in coding operating systems for the Atari or its emulators, EmuTOS could be interesting:

EmuTOS is a single-user single-tasking operating system for Atari ST computer emulators. Today it is just (more or less) running on STonX. But my intention is to have it running on every Atari ST emulator available some day.

It is thought as a replacement for the TOS-images you usually need today on these emulators.

EmuTOS is based on Digital Research's GEMDOS sources, which was made available under GPL license in 1999 by Caldera - and so is EmuTOS.

You will find it at:

<http://www.mucl.de/~mdoering/emutos/en>

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Martin Doering

XaAES v0.93 Released

The freeware and open-source replacement AES for (Free)MiNT is upgraded to version 0.93. The most important changes and improvements are:

- 1 Put the text in the about dialogue in a listbox.  
Ok buttons in all XaAESs own dialogues.
- 2 Fix in handling paths set by a client before AES calls (notably rsrc\_load and shel\_find).
- 3 Fix in iconified windows. (Slider info got lost)
- 4 Fix in form\_alert: Alerts with 2 or less lines are now shrunken in height as well. :-)
- 5 Slight improvement in window title display: If a name doesn't fit, leading and trailing spaces are removed and the title is re-fitted.
- 6 Technical improvements (not visible)
- 7 Sometimes a frame in listboxes was drawn in white. Inserted a missing colour setting.
- 8 Icons are drawn correctly in higher or true colours.  
Thanks Mario Becroft. ;-)
- 9 Reorganization of the lump and chaotic Launch function;  
Extended shell\_write SW\_PDEFDIR implemented.
- 10 Implementation of the hider widget and hiding.
- 11 Implementation of appl\_control.
- 12 At last got ctrl+alt+tab working correctly.
- 13 Implementation of ctrl+alt+[V,X,Y]  
V: unhide all.  
X: hide other  
Y: hide this
- 14 XaAES extension to appl\_search for taskbar programs. (Read the history file).

<http://xaaes.atari.org/>

FunMedia Update

FunMedia is updated. It can load Quake II Modells \*.MD2 with animations.  
More news on my homepage.

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
joe@atarinews.org

Hello friends and neighbors. I, like you, am not in much of a mood for levity today.

The news here on the east coast of the United States is not good. Don't worry, I don't intend to re-hash everything you've been hearing and seeing for the past handful of days. I'm on overload too. This "Information Age" of ours certainly has its down-side. The images and the news stories keep coming at us. It seems that there is always another story queued up and waiting to assault our eyes and ears with sights and sounds that we can't possibly come to terms with in the time that we're given.

"Psychic Burnout" is making itself apparent even as I write this. There is just too much information about too horrible a subject for us to comprehend and digest.

As with the situation itself, the "data stream" that we're now exposed to can either make us weaker or stronger. It's not an across-the-board thing either. Some of us will grow stronger from this ordeal, and some of us will be pushed beyond our ability to deal with what we're shown.

I tend to think that we, as a whole, will be ultimately strengthened by this unmentionable heinous act. The United States, our NATO allies, and indeed, the entire world will learn a lesson from all of this. We will learn that this type of attack is not an acceptable means of solving disputes, and more importantly that if a person, group, or government does take up these tactics that we must in all haste, and with all vehemence, put a stop to it.

Watching news reports of rescue workers in New York has been my major source of solace since the attack. These people are true heroes. Even after two hundred or so of their fellow workers were lost when the twin towers collapsed, they keep going back to look for survivors. Even after it is evident that there can be no more survivors, they will continue to search. They will cry and curse and damn the perpetrators to the worst manifestation of hell that they can imagine, but they will continue.

As much as the thousands of people directly affected by these evil deeds, my thoughts and prayers are with the brave men and women who, at incredible risk to themselves, are beating back the blackness in New York.

You may have noticed that I haven't mentioned the "Pentagon" part of the attack. It's not because I'm anti-government or anything of the sort. It's just that the Pentagon situation is pretty well resolved when

compared to the World Trade Center. The Pentagon is a smaller, lower building, and the loss of life will certainly be a minute percentage of the twin towers.

As if they knew that I was in the process of writing that last paragraph, they just started showing live footage of the Pentagon on fire again. Our hearts also go out to the men and women who lost their lives in the building with five walls while serving their country... while serving all of us.

I've appreciated the e-mails some of you have sent with condolences, good wishes, and concern. While I'm as insulated from these events as anyone in this country can be, it still gives me a good feeling to know that you thought enough to send your thoughts.

My final comment is this: Please, please, please, do not give into the blind rage that we all feel and look for retribution from others simply because they or their ancestors were from a particular part of the globe or follow a particular religion. Do not "become what you have beheld". We must direct our energy in a way that will help us. See people AS people and not as whatever is seems convenient to label them as. It's only in this way that we can be what we were meant to be... an example of the best of mankind.

Okay, let's take a look at what's going on with the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup

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John Garone asks about the time it takes PageStream to load:

"Pagestream 2.2 SE takes forever to load into my Falcon MKI (14meg) with Magic 6 & NVDI 5. So I was wondering if anything can be done to get it to load faster! It loads super fast with Warp9 installed instead of Magic and NVDI. According to PRGFLAGS.PRG, the loading bit is set for fastload. Any thoughts?"

James Alexander tells John:

"I've had a similar experience on a 16mhz STe, but on my 48Mhz TT it runs much quicker. btw the fastload bit as I remember controls whether or not the memory used by the program is cleared or not before running."

John tells James:

"16 vs. 48 [MHz] does make sense it should load faster. Here, it's the same machine but different Auto folder programs. It's really no biggie to switch Auto folders (one for PGS, one for CAB, etc.) so it's just a matter of convenience if I can get PGS to load with Magic & NVDI as fast as with Warp9 (from the good ol' ST days!)."

James replies:

"Yeah it makes sense to me, I understand your need cause I still do use it on my regular STe quite often. Not everyone has a TT or Falcon but still need to speed up pagestream. I was surprised that when you use nvdi it doesn't speed it up as much. I have heard nvdi was quite good in improving performance at least as far as vdi stuff and some of the

gdos functionality it provides."

John tells James:

"I believe NVDI speeds up graphics but I don't see it speeding up program loading (no where near antique Warp9). With Warp9, PGS loads in 2 seconds! With NVDI I wait 30 seconds and re-boot with Warp9!!!!"

Charles Stanley tells John and James:

"On my TT with Magic6 Pagestream (2.2uk) loads in less than one second: I've often wondered why."

Thomas Wellicome asks about replacing his Falcon's floppy drive:

"Recently my Falcon floppy disk drive packed up (after I attempted to insert a disk in it that was not in the best of health). Even after cleaning the heads the old disk drive will read but not write. As the old drive was a bit wobbly at the best of times I decided to splash out on a new PC high density disk drive thinking that it would work. Er no, two different makes of drive later and no joy. The Falcon doesn't detect the drives there at all. My machine is a CLab Mk 1, with fourteen megs. Any Ideas?"

Sasa Andrijasevic tells Thomas:

"You HAVE TO buy Falcon/TT/MSTE HD floppy drive, PC drives won't work due to unknown hardware patch which has to be made on them..."

Thomas tells Sasa:

"Thanks Sasa.

Blast, and let me guess, the Falcon disk drives cost about five times as much as the PC ones. There are times when I hate being an Atari owner."

Lyndon Amsdon tells both Sasa and Thomas:

"Unknown hardware patch? Well do a search at <http://groups.google.com> and you'll probably find dozens of posts on how to fix a floppy drive for use on an Atari. I've said it hundreds of times so I won't do it again!"

Bob Retelle fills in the holes a bit:

"There is essentially NO fundamental difference between the floppy drives Atari or the clone makers used, and the "standard PC" floppy drives available today.

One thing that must be checked however-

Atari systems are configured to address floppy drive A: as Device 0

ALL of the PC drives available in the world come pre-addressed as Drive 1 (for reasons lost in the misty dawn of computing).

You MUST change the drive addressing jumpers on the PC floppy to make the drive Device 0 for the Atari to be able to see it.

There USED to be tiny jumpers on the floppy drive PC board that let you change the DRIVE SELECT line, but since practically no one (except

possibly Atari owners) ever changed them, most manufacturers have eliminated the physical jumpers from newer drives.

Now, most drives have solder pads on the PC board which may have a "zero ohm" resistor (essentially a wire jumper) soldered between the DS 1 pads, or just a solder blob shorting the pads together.

You must examine the PC board with a magnifying glass to find the Drive Select jumper pads and change the jumper, whatever it is, so it shorts the DS 0 pads.

(This is all experience from the ST world, but if Atari held true in its design of the Falcon, it probably holds for the Falcon and its clones). Try it and see if it helps."

Ken Springer asks about language translation:

"I need to translate some German into English. Anyone have a good recommendation for a translation program?"

Martin Byttebier tells Ken:

"You can try Gemtrade. But be aware that the translation will look funny.

You can find it on:

<ftp://chapelie.rma.ac.be/atari/utilities/gemtrade-203.lzh> (407.762 bytes)"

Lyndon Amsdon adds:

"Or what I sometimes do is use Altavista to translate stuff, I have to split text up in to smaller pieces as there is a limit of 150 words if I remember correctly."

Derryck Croker adds another trick to the list:

"Better by far is to html-ise the text and stick it on your web site, and point Altavista at that instead. I find I get better results that way."

Well folks, that's it for this week. The sky will clear again, and we will rebuild upon what was destroyed. Until then, keep your nose to the grindstone, your shoulder to the wheel, your eye on the horizon, and your ear to the ground so that you'll hear what they are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - GameCube Released! 'Portal Runner'!  
\*\*\*\*\* "Majestic" Pulled! Xbox Gains Support!  
Final Fantasy X in 2002!  
And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

### Videogame Wars - Nintendo Strikes Back with GameCube

Just in time for Christmas. One is a purple, toy-like cube. The other two are bulky, black, computer-like boxes. All three are powerful 128-bit videogame systems.

Let the battle begin.

Nintendo Co Ltd will launch its long-awaited GameCube system on Friday in the opening shot of what promises to be a fierce three-way fight for the game console market.

For Nintendo, the GameCube's "cuteness," combined with beefed-up software lineups, represents a new strategy to get an edge over PC-like systems made by technology heavyweights.

The number two game machine maker lost a big chunk of market share to Sony Corp in the 64-bit game console war.

Now it's back with what the company's 75-year-old charismatic president, Hiroshi Yamauchi, says is an advanced luxury toy -- as opposed to the all-in-one home entertainment systems that Sony and Microsoft Corp aim for with their game systems.

"The GameCube is likely to keep attracting the young audience, Nintendo's core loyal fan, as the company focuses on games," said Hirokazu Hamamura, editor in chief at Japan's leading video game magazine, Weekly Famitsu.

"Meanwhile, PlayStation 2 (Sony) and Xbox (Microsoft) will go head-to-head to become a home network platform by going after the older crowd," he said.

But Sony, which has sold 15 million PlayStation 2 units globally, is likely to remain king of the hill, analysts say.

"We expect Sony, which grabbed 70 percent market share in the last console battle, will maintain 60-65 percent share in the renewed console war, with Nintendo's share edging up to 30-35 from 25, with the remainder taken by Microsoft," said Eiji Maeda, senior analyst at Daiwa Institute of Research.

That battle featured Sony's original PlayStation, Nintendo64, and Sega Corp's Dreamcast machine.

In a bid to revitalize its home game console business, industry oldtimer Nintendo took a leaf from Sony's book.

The new console uses optical disks rather than the cumbersome cartridges of its Nintendo64 predecessor. It also offers broad support to third-party game creators, including providing easy-to-handle development tools and a

cheaper loyalty charge.

"Nintendo has become friendly to outside software houses, just like Sony did for the PlayStation debut. That certainly boosted the interest of game creators," Famitsu's Hamamura said.

The high level of support for the GameCube was showcased at Nintendo's SpaceWorld game show last month.

The show featured a wide array of third-party games, including Sega's Sonic Adventure 2 and Soul Calibur from Namco Ltd, hit titles made by software publishers which did not provide games for Nintendo64.

Nintendo, creator of the wildly popular Pokemon game character, is also promoting its own games, such as the Mario and Zelda series.

GameCube can also link to Nintendo's Game Boy Advance hand-held box, allowing users to transfer a character from one machine to the other and to continue to play the same game.

"Such a linkage will be only possible for Nintendo. That will offer new entertainment for users and will boost both machines' sales," said Takiko Mori, an analyst at UBS Warburg.

About 500,000 GameCube units, priced at 25,000 yen (\$208) each, will hit store shelves on Friday, four weeks after Nintendo started a massive advertising campaign.

It aims to ship four million units globally by March 31.

Arch rival Sony, although enjoying a recent resurgence in PlayStation 2 sales thanks to Square Co Ltd's hit Final Fantasy X game, is not standing by quietly.

Sony cut the price of its console, which comes with a DVD player, to 35,000 yen (\$290) from 39,800 yen in Japan in June.

Some analysts anticipate an additional cut of 5,000 yen ahead of the key end-year shopping season, even perhaps a day before the GameCube launch, as it did for the Nintendo64 debut.

A spokesman for Sony Computer Entertainment, Sony's game unit, said it had no such plan, but he said the firm was always reviewing price strategy to fit market conditions.

A summer campaign in which Sony joined hands with McDonald's Co (Japan) Ltd to promote its game characters was also part of a pre-emptive strike, Daiwa's Maeda said.

Japanese software makers also hold high hopes for GameCube, seeing it as a way to fend off an invasion of mobile phones, which compete for disposable income.

According to the Computer Entertainment Software Association (CESA), Japanese consumer game software sales have fallen from a peak of 389 billion yen in 1997 to 293 billion yen in 2000.

Software developers in Japan aren't as excited about Microsoft's offering, the Xbox.

''The Xbox's presentation in August fell short of the GameCube in terms of ease-of-use, design and unit size," said Yoko Sasao, an analyst at Commerzbank Securities.

''It seems the firm is not devoting as many resources to the Japanese market as it claims, given the delay in the hardware launch and the comparatively weak marketing efforts."

The U.S. giant last month delayed the Japanese launch of Xbox to February 22 from a planned debut this year in a bid to first ensure its success at home. Its U.S. launch is set for November 8, ten days before the launch of GameCube in the American market.

But Tetsu Kayama, Chief Operating Officer at Sega, said the Xbox, which has a built-in hard drive and Internet connection with the most powerful console specification, may have an edge over PlayStation 2 whose users need to buy a hard disk and modem.

Microsoft, which has a \$500 million marketing budget, should not be underestimated, experts said.

''If the Xbox is priced much lower than PlayStation 2 it has a good chance to see success in Japan," Famitsu's Hamamura said.

#### Five Studios Added to Microsoft's Expansive Xbox Developer List

Microsoft announced the addition of five world-class design studios to its already distinctive list of developers creating titles for the revolutionary Xbox video game system. The new companies will design and create exclusive game titles to be published under the Microsoft label. Available in stores across North America on Nov. 8, Xbox is the future-generation console system that has attracted the involvement of hundreds of talented industry professionals.

''We are as committed as ever to providing gamers with experiences that were never possible before Xbox," said Ed Fries, vice president of Xbox Games Publishing at Microsoft. ''One of the first steps to success is gathering top industry talent that share our creative vision. These new studios enable us to continue to publish incredible Xbox games."

As the only video game console that comes with a built-in hard drive and Ethernet port for online broadband games, Xbox is able to deliver more powerful game experiences. Bringing their creativity, skill and unsurpassed expertise to future Xbox titles, the new developers join the list of creative forces already at work on Xbox, including Oddworld Inhabitants Inc., Bizarre Creations and Microsoft's own in-house development teams such as Bungie Studios. Always expanding the breadth and depth of the Xbox experience, these new studios will develop titles in a variety of genres, including action, sports and adventure.

The excitement of being the newest members of the Microsoft team was reflected in a statement from Mike Ball, founder and technical director of Just Add Monsters Ltd.: ''We're excited to be a part of the Xbox team because they're as passionate about making great games as we are. And they've created the only console that enables us to bring our visions to life."

The five design studios are these:

- Argonaut Games plc has produced numerous hit games such as "Croc: The Legend of the Gobbos," and new technologies such as the Super FX chip.
- Just Add Monsters Ltd. (JAM), based in Cambridge, England, was founded and is staffed by former Sony Computer Entertainment developers whose respective artistic, development and design talents have been instrumental in the production of numerous blockbuster titles, including "MediEvil," "MediEvil2" and "Frogger."
- Mesa Logic Inc., located in a suburb of Dallas, has developed such arcade hits as "Area 51," "Maximum Force" and "Site 4," each published by Atari Games Corp. The three award-winning games went on to set sales records in the arcade industry.
- Presto Studios Inc. was founded in 1991 in San Diego. Presto has grown into a cutting-edge entertainment software development company known for its engaging, photo-realistic games, including "Myst III: Exile" and the Journeyman Project series of time travel adventures.
- Studio Gigante Inc., in Chicago, has produced such games as the widely popular "Mortal Kombat" and WWF series, "NBA Showtime 2000" and "NFL Blitz 2000."

#### 3DO Ships Portal Runner

The 3DO Company announced that the Portal Runner game for PlayStation2 computer entertainment system and for Game Boyfi Color handheld system shipped out to retailers today. 3DO's most anticipated title for this Fall featuring the courageous heroine Vikki has garnered much press, including several covers of leading magazines.

The Portal Runner game will be featured on the cover of the October issue of PSE2 magazine. The editors awarded the game a 97 percent rating and a Gold Award, saying, "'Portal Runner is an exceptional Action/Platform game that offers a great mix of excellent graphics, special effects and music. ... (T)he overall package, right down to the very entertaining CG cut scenes, screams quality. ... (I)t offers entertainment that the entire family can enjoy, but not at the expense of the more hard-core among us. I know you have many choices to make this holiday season but, if you are an Action/Platform fan like I am, you are not going to want to miss Portal Runner."

The Portal Runner game has also been featured on the covers of GamePro and Silicon Magazine. "'Portal Runner blends traditional game elements with colorful, high-end graphics to tell an intriguing fairy tale that could indeed be a fun adventure for everyone," says IGN. "'3DO is working hard to ensure that Portal Runner ends up a AAA product," writes PSM. "'We have a feeling that it's definitely headed in the right direction." GamePen says, "'Portal Runner is easily my favorite of the (3DO) PlayStation 2 games ... Portal Runner is a sure-fire winner ..."

In the Portal Runner game, players are taken through an engaging story line that will keep them glued to their seats. The story begins with Brigitte Bleu about to unleash her diabolical scheme to trap Vikki and sink her claws into Sarge. This plot launches Vikki on a fantastic journey through a variety of exciting new toy worlds. She will eventually encounter a new friend and ally, Leo the Lion, who stays by her side to fight off the evil forces of these new worlds. The cooperative relationship that forms between

the two characters will add a new level of excitement and close combat gameplay. Players will enjoy the option of controlling Leo or working with him as a team when playing Vikki. With advanced Artificial Intelligence, Leo will also be able to protect Vikki in combat and challenge gamers to restrain his savage instincts.

The Portal Runner game will feature a surrealistic look with exotic visuals; gamers will be truly immersed in the astonishing graphics. Giving great depth and variety to Portal Runner is the addictive bow and arrow gameplay. The realistic and spectacular precision technique of the bow and arrow will help Vikki vanquish foes and remove obstacles in her travels. To add more excitement, Portal Runner offers a huge variety of environments including Our World, Prehistoric World, Medieval World, and Space World, all highly detailed and deeply interactive. Amid this blend of classic shooting and platform action, players can experiment with different gameplay approaches to keep things interesting.

#### FINAL FANTASY X To Arrive In U.S. In January 2002

Square Electronic Arts L.L.C. announced that FINAL FANTASY X for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system will hit U.S. retail store shelves in January 2002.

FINAL FANTASY X was released in Japan on July 19 and sold through 90% of the 2.14 million units it shipped in the first four days. It is the first PlayStation 2 title to reach the 2 million-unit mark.

FINAL FANTASY X is the first title in the popular role-playing game (RPG) series to be released for the PlayStation 2. With the caliber of artistic, creative and developmental talents involved in the project, FINAL FANTASY X will set new standards for games released for the PlayStation 2, reminiscent of the technological feats FINAL FANTASY VII accomplished on the original PlayStation in 1997.

The main character, Tidus, is a star player of blitzball, a full contact sport. After miraculously surviving the destruction of his homeland, he awakens among ruins and thereafter meets a young woman named Yuna. As a summoner, Yuna must travel to distant temples and learn the secret art of summoning aeons -- powerful spirits of yore, in order to defeat "Sin." Tidus learns that a thousand years in the past, mankind lived in spectacular cities and relied on machines for everything, until Sin suddenly appeared and destroyed all civilization. Now, people shun technology, and no one knows when "Sin" will strike again. FINAL FANTASY X features a distinct Asian influence, bringing a fresh feel to the characters, music, settings and story.

FINAL FANTASY X will also be the first in the series to feature voiceovers for the characters. James Arnold Taylor ("A Moment of Silence") and Hedy Burress ("Valentine") will voice the main characters in the U.S. release of FINAL FANTASY X. James Arnold Taylor voices the main character, Tidus. The voice of "Walla" in the 1999 TV series "Futurama," James Arnold Taylor appeared in the feature film "A Moment of Silence," and most recently lent his voice talent to the TV series "Team Atlantis." Hedy Burress provides the voice for the female lead, Yuna. Best known for her performance in the 1996 HBO original movie "If These Walls Could Talk," Hedy Burress' credits also include a role in the upcoming TV series "First Monday," "Boston Common" and recurring guest appearances on "Gideon's

Crossing."

In addition to the game's voiceover dialogue and fluid gameplay-to-full-motion-video transitions, FINAL FANTASY X offers fully 3D environments that seamlessly integrate real-time movement with battles, allowing players to walk around and engage in battles on the same field map screen. Life-like, high-polygon, motion-captured characters designed by Tetsuya Nomura (FINAL FANTASY VII, VIII, Parasite Eve, Parasite Eve 2(TM)) bring realism to the screen. As seen in previous FINAL FANTASY titles, players will be able to enjoy new mini-games, such as mastering the sport of blitzball and the Al Bhed language. FINAL FANTASY X carries a newly designed battle system with a unique character development system using the ``sphere grid.'' The game will be released on DVD format with Dolby Digital 5.1 sound.

At this year's E3 Expo held in May, FINAL FANTASY X was nominated for several awards, including Best RPG from the Game Critics Awards, Best of Show/Console 10 from Game Informer, E3 Top 5 from PlayStation Magazine (PSM), Best Graphics/PlayStation 2 and Best RPG/PlayStation 2 from IGN.com.

The September 2001 issue of Electronic Gaming Monthly (EGM) describes the game as ``...a game that amazes on multiple levels...the graphics immediately catch your eye...environments are expansive, elaborately decorated scads of characters and bystanders populate the screen, and textures are rich in detail and color. So now more than ever, an FF game is like watching a movie, in full DVD quality, on your TV screen.'' FINAL FANTASY X has been on Official PlayStation Magazine's (OPM) ``Most Wanted PlayStation 2 Games'' list since April.

#### Midway Sports Scores Big On Game Boy Advance With All-New NFL Blitz 20-02

Midway Sports announced today that NFL Blitz 20-02 shipped for the Game Boy Advance, Nintendo's 32-bit handheld videogame system. NFL Blitz 20-02 is also scheduled to ship in December for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system and is currently in development for the Xbox video game system from Microsoft and the Nintendo GameCube.

The ultimate football videogame for casual and hard-core football fans, NFL Blitz 20-02 combines authentic NFL realism with adrenaline-style action, and for the first time on any handheld system, players follow all of the outrageous action on the field with play-by-play commentary. Officially licensed by the NFL and PLAYERS INC, and featuring NFL teams and players, NFL Blitz has "evolved," to deliver fast-paced action, NFL strategy and advanced-technology graphics, including new camera angles, animations and player models. To add even more NFL realism, Oakland Raiders' defensive back and perennial NFL Pro Bowler Charles Woodson signed an exclusive deal with Midway to be the signature athlete for NFL Blitz 20-02. The Heisman Trophy winner will appear on the package cover and in NFL Blitz 20-02 advertising materials.

"The Game Boy Advance has allowed us to bring even more attitude and over-the-top action to the handheld NFL Blitz series," said Helene Sheeler, vice president of marketing, Midway. "Delivering advanced graphics to its proprietary blend of authentic NFL football, with 'no rules' gameplay and 'no mercy' attitude is what makes NFL Blitz 20-02 a must-have for gamers and football fans alike."

To bring tremendous depth and intense excitement to the Game Boy Advance version of NFL Blitz 20-02, new elements have been added like a unique season memory code system that allows gamers to play and save a complete NFL season with their favorite team. Prior to starting a season, gamers can learn the controls and hone their skills in any of the new Mini-Games including "Uprights" and "4th-n'-Goal."

#### NFL Blitz 20-02 Game Boy Advance Key Features

- Real Commentary - All of the attitude and play-by-play commentary as only NFL Blitz can offer -- for the first time on a handheld video game system
- Next-Generation Graphics - With Game Boy Advance's "advanced-technology system," NFL Blitz 20-02 boasts new camera angles, player models and animations all working to put the player right in the middle of the gridiron mayhem
- Unique Season Memory Code System - This unique system allows players to play, save and return to a full NFL season
- Mini-Games - Learn the controls and hone essential NFL Blitz 20-02 skills in any of the Mini-Games including "Uprights" and "4th-n'-Goal"
- Real NFL Team Attributes - Teams will always bring their "A" game as real NFL team attributes will play a role in NFL Blitz 20-02

#### Electronic Arts Suspends 'Majestic' Online Game

The publisher of the online role-playing game "Majestic," an interactive thriller involving murder and corporate intrigue, said on Wednesday it suspended the popular game after Tuesday's attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and on the Pentagon.

A spokesman for leading video game publisher Electronic Arts Inc. said the company suspended the game on Tuesday and that executives would decide later on Wednesday when to reactivate the game for its tens of thousands of online players.

"Some elements of that game that may be objectionable to some people" considering the current circumstances said Jeff Brown, an Electronic Arts spokesman. Brown said that he expects the game will be restarted late this week or early next week.

Majestic, considered by many to be a ground-breaking game because of the way it draws players into the unraveling of a tangled conspiracy, was launched early last month and has been supported by television and radio advertising.

After registering, the game calls, e-mails, faxes and instant-messages players with clues, suggestions, and in some cases, screaming or frantic communications from characters in the story played by actors.

Brown said that Electronic Arts was concerned that the phone calls, in

particular, might disturb people after the coordinated attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in which thousands are feared dead and tens of thousands of people may still be missing.

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A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Internet News Traffic Soars Following U.S. Attacks

Internet news traffic soared on Tuesday following attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., slowing retrieval times on popular Web news sites and forcing online publishers to cut back on graphics and interactive features.

CNN.com, which is affiliated with the AOL Time Warner-owned 24-hour CNN news channel, said it saw record traffic, hitting 9 million page views an hour since the tragedy occurred, compared to ordinary volume of 11 million page views per day.

"This is the largest amount of traffic we've ever had," said CNN.com spokeswoman Edna Johnson.

"We tripled our server capacity internally," she said, "We've had calls from all over the world from outlets offering us bandwidth, because they knew we were at maximum capacity."

Overall, the attacks had minimal impact on the Internet, experts said.

The average "reachability" of the Internet dropped just over 8 percent from 96 percent to 88 percent around 7 a.m. PDT, about one hour after the attack began, according to statistics on the Web site of Internet traffic monitoring firm Matrix.Net.

"Shortly after the attacks, Matrix.Net detected a significant performance degradation of major Internet infrastructure points and Web sites," the company said. "While the spike was significant, it was relatively short-lived, and IP (Internet Protocol) traffic returned to near-normal performance levels within about an hour."

Keynote Systems Inc., which measures the performance of the Internet sites, said the news sites it monitors saw their performance slow as much as tenfold during the morning hours as a result of the traffic.

"Overall the Internet is behaving normally," said Bill Jones, senior director of public services. "But the biggest casualty so far has been the Internet news sites."

News sites monitored by Keynote include MSNBC.com, FoxNews.com, CNN.com, ABCNews.com, and CBSNews.com.

He said normally it takes between 2.5 and 3.5 seconds to access a Web page. But between 9 a.m. and noon EDT, the access time was between 20 and 40 seconds. "Most have since returned to between five and eight seconds," he said. "But then again most sites have switched to text-heavy content."

Many sites curtailed much of their graphics-heavy and interactive features and programming, focusing instead on text reporting.

MSNBC.com, a joint venture of Microsoft Corp. and General Electric Co.'s NBC, saw its traffic increase tenfold over its average daily usage of 3 million unique users.

"No one could have predicted the scope or magnitude of this tragedy, but we're handling everything well," said MSNBC.com spokesman Peter Dorogoff.

MSNBC has also added servers to accommodate the additional volume.

ABCNews.com and FoxNews.com also said they were at maximum capacity.

Unique users refers to the number of individual Internet user has visited a site, while page views correspond to the number of Web pages accessed through a site overall.

ABCNews.com spokeswoman Lauren Kapp said the site's traffic doubled from Monday, although she declined to provide specific numbers. The Web site for the ABC television network, which is owned by Walt Disney Co., has managed to double its capacity, she said, by sharing servers with its sister sports site ESPN.com.

FoxNews.com, which is owned by News Corp., also used server capacity from its FoxSports.com Web site.

Dana McClintock, a spokesman with Viacom Inc.'s CBS, said the CBSNews.com site is not tracking its traffic numbers, but he said, "I haven't heard of any problems."

With long-distance and cell phone networks being taxed by worried callers, many turned to the Internet.

"We had a spike in volume in our instant messaging service," said Ann Brackbill, a spokeswoman for America Online, AOL Time Warner's flagship Internet service. "But everything is fine. We are focused on keeping the network running well so people can communicate."

Microsoft's Internet service provider MSN has also seen an increase in traffic.

"MSN has taken steps to add additional servers to handle the increase in traffic and have turned off (memory) intensive features that are not related to communications," said Sarah Lefko, MSN Lead Product Manager. "We want to make sure that everyone who needs to communicate via Hotmail or MSN Messenger has the ability to do so."

#### Internet Holds Up Under Stress After Terrorist Attacks

In the immediate aftermath of the worst terrorist strike in U.S. history, the hundreds of thousands of people who went online for news and

information found it slow going on major news sites. But overall, the Internet remained intact as it withstood the greatest stress in its 32-year history, according to Internet performance measuring firms.

News sites on the Web were inundated with record numbers of people seeking information about the plane crashes at New York's World Trade Center, at the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania. A few sites went down, but most others managed to stay up, though the heavy traffic slowed them significantly, according to Internet measuring company Matrix.Net.

"Shortly after the attacks, Matrix.Net detected a significant performance degradation of major Internet infrastructure points and Web sites," said the company, which used increased "packet loss" and decreased "reachability" as measuring factors. "While the spike was significant, it was relatively short-lived, and [Internet Protocol] traffic returned to near-normal performance levels within about an hour."

Most of the major news sites were affected either by the burden of large numbers of people trying to access them or by the direct loss of Web server capacity as a result of the attacks in New York.

CNN.com and ABCNews.com both went down within the same timeframe. CNN.com was unavailable between 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. EST. CNN officials said the site experienced nine million page views per hour, as compared to a normal volume of 11 million page views per day.

The numbers were the largest in the site's history, according to the company. ABCNews.com also went down between 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

MSNBC.com and Foxnews.com went from a two-and-a-half to three-and-a-half second average response time to 20-to-40 seconds between 9 a.m. -- roughly when the attack started -- and noon, according to Matrix.Net.

MSNBC.com said it experienced a ten-fold increase in traffic, with nearly 300,000 people trying to log on to the site after the devastating attacks. The site, like others, was forced to use additional servers, and, also like most other major news sites, stripped down its normal offerings of graphics and interactive features to go with mostly text-based bare news reporting.

News sites said interest in the tragic events was higher than for any other event, including the U.S. presidential election. With global interest in the strike intense, numbers are expected to stay high. The BBC News Online site also reported record numbers of hits.

With telephone capacity stressed, including wireless networks, many people turned to the Net and e-mail as a way to communicate with loved ones and others about the strikes. Some New Yorkers set up Web sites so that friends and relatives could check in. Others flooded chat rooms to vent their anger and frustration at the attacks. Discussion groups have already formed.

Matrix.Net said that several hours after the attack, the Internet "appears to have survived a severe test of the adaptable traffic routing concepts it embodies."

Average "reachability" dropped a little more than eight percent, from 96 percent to 88 percent, around 10 a.m. EST, roughly an hour after the attacks began.

As of 8 p.m. EST Tuesday, the FBI site was apparently the only news or government site still having problems, according to Keynote Systems. The FBI site was working Wednesday morning -- it lists a telephone number for those who may have information concerning the attacks.

#### FBI Sets Up Web Site to Gather Attack Information

The FBI has set up an Internet Web site to gather information about the coordinated air crash attacks on New York and Washington, U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft said on Tuesday.

He urged people to come forward with any information they might have about the attacks, which devastated New York's World Trade Center twin towers and left the Pentagon outside Washington D.C. smoldering.

"Thousands of FBI agents in all of the field offices across the country ... (and internationally) assisted by personnel from other Department of Justice agencies are cooperating in this investigation," Ashcroft told reporters in Washington.

"The FBI has established a Web site where people can report any information about these crimes. That address is [www.ifccfbi.gov](http://www.ifccfbi.gov)," he said, adding that a tollfree number was also being set up.

"It takes courage to come forward in situations like this and I urge anyone with information that may be helpful to the authorities to use these resources."

He said the Immigration and Naturalization Service, the U.S. Marshals Service, Bureau of Prisons and the Drug Enforcement Administration would also help investigate the attack and in taking care of victims and their families.

#### Experts: Digital Privacy May Suffer Amid Attacks

Privacy advocates warned Thursday against the dangers of increased Internet wiretapping and monitoring by law enforcement in the wake of Tuesday's hijacked airplane attacks on landmark buildings in New York and outside Washington, D.C.

The worry is that authorities will trample digital civil liberties in their zeal to prevent possible future attacks like the ones which destroyed the World Trade Center and damaged the Pentagon, experts said.

Within one day of the attack, officials were discussing the need to tighten measures to protect national security and to plan retaliation for the attacks.

"I heard former President (George H. W.) Bush saying we've got to prepare to give up our civil liberties," said Erwin Chemerinsky, a constitutional law professor at the University of Southern California Law School in Los Angeles. "All of that sentiment is very dangerous at this point in time."

"I think there's going to be a real effort to give government more

surveillance authority," he added.

Internet service providers America Online, a unit of AOL Time Warner Inc., EarthLink Network Inc. and Microsoft Corp confirmed that they are cooperating with the investigations into the attacks, although they would not say specifically how.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation was heavily criticized when it was revealed last year that it had been installing at Internet service provider sites so-called "Carnivore" devices for monitoring e-mails. Microsoft and EarthLink said they have not installed the boxes, but are cooperating with the FBI, nonetheless.

The devices, now dubbed "DCS1000," not only record all the communications of the target, but of other subscriber customers of the Internet service provider, as well, according to privacy rights activists.

It is easy for authorities to get search warrants to use the monitoring technology, allowing them to conduct investigations as needed, experts said.

But that might not stop officials from seeking broader powers to prevent America's enemies from using the Internet to coordinate future attacks.

David Sobel, legal counsel for the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington, D.C., said U.S. lawmakers and government officials typically call for increased surveillance authority after terrorist-related disasters.

"Unfortunately, there sometimes is a tendency to capitalize on these situations to increase investigative power," Sobel said. "If past incidents are any guide we are likely to see such proposals."

"When I heard (of) this (attack), I thought people are just going to trample the Bill of Rights into the dust," said Lance Cottrell, president of Anonymizer.com, which allows people to surf the Web anonymously.

"Some people, I think cynically, are taking advantage of this moment to push an agenda which they've had for some time," Cottrell said.

Experts pointed out that in the case of Tuesday's devastating attack, however, a paper trail is already developing, which might make increased online surveillance unnecessary.

"The feeling I get is these folks (hijackers and accomplices) made very little effort to hide themselves," said Richard M. Smith, chief technology officer of the Privacy Foundation, a non-profit organization that researches privacy issues related to technology. "They used real names and credit cards."

Investigators have identified several suspects and found rental car receipts and other documents that are aiding their search for evidence.

Despite that, some experts said they feared broader electronic profiling of individuals in general would be hastened as a result of the attacks.

"There will be a lot of data-collecting cloaked in national security concern," said Lori Fena, chairman and co-founder of Truste, a San Jose, California, non-profit organization that runs a Web site privacy seal program.

Once the system is in place it is easy to expand such data aggregation beyond the specific purpose, she said.

"The use of the data should be restricted to security measures and not used by corporations (or governments) for other purposes," Fena added.

#### Spammers Exploit Tragedies With Online Scams

Anti-spam groups are alerting Internet users not to be fooled by phony e-mail or online forum solicitations for help in the aftermath of this week's devastating attacks on the East Coast.

Consumer advocacy groups warn that donations for victims and their families are being fraudulently requested through e-mails or postings with "Express Relief Fund" or "Victims Survivor Fund" as the subject.

Some messages even claimed to support the Red Cross and linked users to a fake Web site that has since been taken off the Internet.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and legitimate relief agencies expressed some concern over the repugnant solicitations, but stressed that the public response to this week's deadly attacks has been overwhelmingly positive.

The Coalition Against Unsolicited Commercial Email (CAUCE) and other organizations offered tips on determining whether a donation request is legitimate.

The groups, which claim some solicitations may violate U.S. and European laws, say virtually none of the larger relief agencies request funds by sending unsolicited e-mail to people who are not already involved with the agency.

They add that if the receiver does not know the organization or person who sent the request, it is probably fraudulent.

According to reports, scammers can often secure merchant status to accept credit card payments, and users should examine URLs to ensure that Web sites are not bogus. The anti-spam groups suggest that uncertain users should try to contact the agency by phone or other means to ensure credibility.

FTC spokeswoman Cathy McFarlane told NewsFactor that the agency has seen reports about spammers' efforts to capitalize on the national tragedy.

She said the FTC is "also a law enforcement agency" and is monitoring the situation, adding that consumers may contact the agency at 1-877-FTC-HELP or by filing online complaints at the agency's Web site.

"We also share all of our fraud and deception complaint data, in real time, with hundreds of law enforcement allies throughout the U.S. and Canada," said an FTC statement.

Some have expressed concern that the spamming and phony Web sites would slow legitimate Web traffic, and CAUCE executive director Ray Everett-Church said the rush to seek information and provide help might

cause more people to be duped.

Still, officials with the Red Cross say they are using the Internet and e-mail to their advantage in raising funds and posting information for friends and families of victims as well as volunteers.

"We are certainly accepting online donations. We've shared information online about how people can help, and we also had information on ways to volunteer on the Web," Red Cross spokeswoman Kelly Alexander told NewsFactor.

She said the agency planned to release a statement on the scams, but that public response to the terrorist attacks has been huge.

"The response has been both terrific and overwhelming," Alexander said. "People just want to help."

#### 'Mafiaboy' Loses Liberty After Internet Hack-Attack

A Canadian teenage hacker nicknamed "Mafiaboy" was sentenced to eight months in a youth detention center on Wednesday, a move welcomed by prosecutors as a strong message against the world's hacking community.

Judge Gilles Ouellet ruled that the 17-year-old Montreal teenager committed a criminal act when he crippled Internet sites like Buy.com, eBay Inc. and Yahoo! last year, causing an estimated \$1.7 billion in damages.

The case underscored the Internet's vulnerability to cyber-attacks and fraud.

"This was an attack that weakened a whole electronic communication system. This is a grave matter," Ouellet told the Quebec Youth Court.

The boy, who pleaded guilty in January to 55 charges of mischief, cannot be identified under a Canadian law protecting young offenders. He showed no emotion at the sentencing hearing.

Ouellet also ordered the teenager to face one year of probation after his detention ends and fined him \$160. He will be allowed occasional visits to family and friends during his time in detention.

Most of the charges against Mafiaboy were for unauthorized access to a computer. The prosecutor in the case, Louis Miville-Deschenes, withdrew the remaining charges last winter and said on Wednesday he was pleased with the ruling.

"We think it is a reasonable ruling. It sends a strong message to hackers that they will get caught if they do things like that," he told reporters.

Defense lawyer Yan Romanowski said he was disappointed and surprised by the judgement and was considering an appeal.

"Detention is too much as far as I am concerned. I don't think it was a case of detention," he said.

The case stretches back to February 2000 when a number of Web sites were crippled after being bombarded by thousands of messages over a short period

of time.

Known as a "denial of service" attack and launched by a hacker who called himself Mafiaboy, the Internet invasion also jammed sites such as Excite and Amazon.com , preventing legitimate users from gaining access.

Other sites such as CNN.com, owned by AOL Time Warner Inc. were also affected.

The Mounties, working in cooperation with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, arrested the youth in April 2000 after a probe that included taps on phone and computer communications and the help of informants. Investigators said Mafiaboy bragged about his cyber-attack in Internet chat rooms.

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